

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201400589, North Lanarkshire Council

**Sector:** local government

**Subject:** improvements and renovation

**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C complained to the council about their refusal to install a gas fire in her home when the existing one broke down and was replaced with an electric fire. Mrs C said that she offered to pay for a new gas fire but the council refused and advised her to use her gas central heating system. She was concerned that the electric fire would affect her asthma but was told that it was council policy to only install electric fires. Mrs C was unhappy that the gas central heating took longer to heat up, was unreliable, and more expensive to run when she needed to get up during the night because of suffering from other disabilities. She felt that the council may be in breach of their own disability policy by not allowing her to have a gas fire.

We found that the council had checked the gas central heating was properly working and they had arranged for advice to be given on how to heat her home efficiently but this was refused by her. We did not find evidence to show that the council had failed to follow their written procedures in terms of their gas safety policy or that their policy failed to meet Mrs C's health and disability needs when refusing her a gas fire. They also made a prompt referral to social services to assess Mrs C's health needs, although this was not carried out. The council said that this was because Mrs C refused the assessment but Mrs C said she was told it was unlikely social services could do anything about getting her a gas fire. We found no evidence that Mrs C was given this advice.

We were satisfied that the council had not dismissed her health concerns and noted that they remained willing to explore Mrs C's health needs and the options available. We found, therefore, that the council's actions were reasonable.